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Shape of the World

It has been made possible this week to get a very clear notion of the shape of the world through only two documents. One is the text of Premier Kosygin's interview with James Reston of the *New York Times* and the other the transcript of Secretary Rusk's interview with Paul Niven.

The Kosygin interview makes it clear that the Soviet Union still proposes to achieve the world-wide domination of communism, by peaceful means if possible, and by wars of "national liberation," if necessary.

The Rusk interview makes it clear that the United States is determined to resist Communist conquest of the world, by peaceful means if possible, but by resistance to Communist military efforts, where necessary.

This is not a very cheerful view of the world, but it is one that corresponds to reality. It describes the frame in which international relations, for the present, must be conducted. Secretary Rusk was saying in Washington: "I think it is quite clear that the leaders of the Soviet Union continue to be committed to their world revolution, that is, they want to advance communism throughout the world and they feel that it is the wave of the future." Half way around the world the Russians were releasing the Soviet Premier's belligerent assertion: "We believe that wars of national liberation are just wars, and they will continue as long as there is national oppression by imperialist powers."

The views of Secretary Rusk were couched in his usual diplomatic and good-mannered way. Those of the Premier were encased in the usual abusive Communist bombast. Both messages, nevertheless, come through loud and clear. The Soviet Union is going to continue to push Communist conquest. The United States is going to resist.

This is not a happy prospect. But it is the same prospect that has been before us since World War II. And it is the prospect with which we are going to have to live until or unless the Soviet Union modifies its purposes or until and unless the United States decides that it will no longer resist those purposes. This fundamental conflict cannot be forgotten. It is the great fact of life in our time. The existence of this contest gives consistence, coherence and meaning to events around the world.

As long as this impasse persists there can, of course, be no real peace of the sort that was possible from time to time in the 18th Century or the 19th Century. There cannot be cordial and normal relations between a power bent on universal conquest and a power determined to resist.

The outside limits of diplomatic achievement, in these circumstances, extend only so far as the means of moderating the methods by which the conflict proceeds. The two governments achieved a success in this area through the nuclear test-ban agreement. They have had something like a tacit agreement to avoid measures certain to lead to old-fashioned conventional wars and that is a gain. But the prosecution of wars by infiltration still goes on and the resistance to war by infiltration still goes on. The Soviet Union likes to call these wars "wars of national liberation" and it describes resistance to them as "imperialist aggression." The United States describes both operations differently.

Whatever terminology is used by either side, it is perfectly clear that what is involved is war—war that is killing and wounding and wasting, however waged. There can be no peace until one side abandons the prosecution of wars by infiltration or the other side abandons resistance to them. In this predicament, the question is not "Will there be war?" The question is: "Where will the war be?" And the answer is: "In South Vietnam now and later in any small country open to Communist aggression."

The outlook is gloomy. But it is not hopeless. It is said that time moderates many fighting faiths. So it does—but not by the mere passage of time alone. The moderation comes about through the effective and courageous use of time by those who do not wish to submit to the fighting faiths of others. The determination not to submit must be made plain. The determination to share with the people of the Soviet Union the good things possible in a world at peace must constantly be held up to view by patient exposition of our policy, by every kind of international intercourse that will exhibit to the people and leaders of the Soviet Union the advantages of coexistence. While we wait for policies to change, we must neither be plunged into despair by the bellicose words and acts of Soviet Premiers nor deluded with hope by false promises of peace. This is the shape of the world in our time.